



FILL THE FRAME

One obstacle awaiting you during your journey toward mastering composition is also one of the easiest to overcome. What is the obstacle? *Filling Your Frame*. Not getting close enough to your subject is perhaps the largest, tallest and biggest photo composition obstacle to overcome yet also one of the easiest to correct.

When you're shooting a large scale scene it can be hard to know how big your subject should be in the frame. Do you know who or what the subject is in the photograph to the right? I don't. You might ask yourself should I move in closer, should I zoom in - if so, how much?

In fact, leaving too much empty space in a scene is the most widespread photo composition mistake. Not filling your frame makes your subject smaller than it needs to be and can also leave viewers confused about what they are supposed to be looking at. We don't want that.

To avoid these problems, you should zoom in to fill the frame, or get about two feet closer to your subject. Filling the whole picture area can make a big difference to your composition. So yes, physically moving closer to your subject or zooming in can give you a more interesting take on things.

Once you think you have filled the frame with that flower or portrait of your friend, spouse, lover neighbor or stranger, ask yourself the



following questions - 1. are the flower petals touching the edges of the frame? 2. Is the person's forehead cut off a bit at the top of your frame? If the answer to either question is NO then you are not yet close enough - so get closer!

If every photographer made it a point to get in so close that the main subject or subjects were touching the edges of the frame, compositional success would increase ten-fold!

Pay close attention. I am not saying that every photo you take should be one with the subject touching the edges of the frame. At least initially, however, it is a great habit to get into, since in a short time you will be taking those two steps closer without thinking and making the consistent discovery that your compositions are far more intimate and stronger than ever before.



Why does filling the frame work? Moving in closer or zooming in with your camera lens gives your subject the prominence it deserves. As a photographer you will make a greater impact by filling the frame when you capture images.

Filling the frame makes the subject larger and cuts down on clutter. Remember, we don't want cluttered images but instead simple composition to make a larger impact.

In the next pages we will look at various examples that will show you what happens when a photographer does not fill the frame; then we will have a look at photographer's images that have filled the frame. I'll see you there.

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